

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

- 1 1. (Twice Amended) A vehicle sharing system for sharing a
2 fleet of vehicles, comprising:
3 a plurality of ports at geographically remote locations
4 relative to each other;
5 a plurality of user interface terminals at said plurality
6 of ports for receiving requests for vehicles from
7 the fleet; and
8 a computer system coupled for communication with said
9 plurality of user interface terminals and
10 programmed for:
11 in response to a user request received at a first
12 port, defining a first vehicle search group
13 (VSG) of the first port;
14 in response to at least one vehicle in the first
15 VSG, allocating a vehicle therefrom to the
16 user request;
17 in response to no vehicle in the first VSG,
18 defining a second VSG of a second port;
19 in response to at least one vehicle in the second
20 VSG, selecting a vehicle therefrom for
21 allocating to the user request; and
22 in response to selecting a vehicle from the second
23 VSG, generating a relocation request of the
24 selected vehicle from the second port to the
25 first port.

1 8. (Twice Amended) A method for sharing a fleet of vehicles,
2 comprising:
3 providing a plurality of interface terminals at a
4 plurality of ports at geographically remote
5 locations relative to each other;
6 receiving a request for a vehicle from the fleet from a
7 user at an interface terminal of a first port;
8 transmitting the request to a central computer; and
9 executing a vehicle allocation program at the central
10 computer to perform:
11 defining a first vehicle search group (VSG) for the
12 first port and a second VSG for a second
13 port;
14 allocating to the request a vehicle from the first
15 VSG in response to a suitable vehicle present
16 in the first VSG;
17 allocating to the request a vehicle from the second
18 VSG in response to no suitable vehicle
19 present in the first VSG; and
20 generating a command for relocating the allocated
21 vehicle from the second port to the first
22 port in response to allocating a vehicle from
23 the second VSG.

1 10. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 8, wherein
2 the step of defining a first VSG further includes
3 including vehicles due to arrive at the first port within
4 a preset time period in the first VSG.

1 11. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 8, further
2 comprising, in response to the central command generating
3 a command for relocating the allocated vehicle:
4 connecting a first end of a tow bar to a trailer hitch of
5 a first vehicle and a second end of the tow bar to
6 a trailer hitch of a second vehicle; and
7 towing the second vehicle with the first vehicle.

1 12. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 8, further
2 comprising, in response to the central command generating
3 a command for relocating the allocated vehicle:
4 connecting a carrier bracket to a carrier hitch
5 receptacle of a first vehicle; and
6 carrying a second vehicle on the carrier bracket.

1 13. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 8, further
2 comprising, in response to the central command generating
3 a command for relocating the allocated vehicle,
4 displaying a relocation message to an attendant of the
5 second port.

1 14. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 8, wherein
2 executing a vehicle allocation program at the central
3 computer further includes defining the second VSG
4 different than the first VSG.

1 15. (Twice Amended) A vehicle sharing system for sharing a
2 fleet of vehicles, comprising:
3 a plurality of ports at geographically remote locations
4 relative to each other;
5 a computer system in communication with said plurality of
6 ports and programmed to defining a search depth
7 vehicle search group (VSG) for each port in which
8 one or more available vehicles from the fleet may
9 be located at any given time for possible
10 allocation to a user at the port, determine a
11 number of vehicles in a first search depth VSG of a
12 first port and, in responses thereto, to determine
13 whether additional vehicles should be relocated to
14 the first port; and
15 means for relocating one or more vehicles from a second
16 port to the first port, upon a determination by
17 said computer system that additional vehicles
18 should be relocated to the first port.

1 21. (Twice Amended) A method for sharing a fleet of vehicles
2 among one or more users, comprising:
3 providing a plurality of ports at geographically remote
4 locations relative to each other;
5 providing a central computer in communication with the
6 plurality of ports;
7 executing a vehicle allocation program at the central
8 computer to perform:
9 defining a first vehicle search group (VSG) for a
10 first port, in which one or more vehicles
11 from the fleet may be located at any given
12 time, and a second VSG for a second port, in
13 which one or more vehicles from the fleet may
14 be located at any given time;
15 determining a number of available vehicles in the
16 first VSG; and
17 based on the number of available vehicles in the
18 first VSG, determining whether additional
19 vehicles should be relocated to the first
20 port; and
21 relocating one or more vehicles from the second port to
22 the first port, upon a determination by the central
23 computer that additional vehicles should be
24 relocated to the first port.

1 22. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 21, wherein
2 executing a vehicle allocation program at the central
3 computer further comprises:
4 detecting a location of each vehicle in the fleet;
5 transmitting the location of each vehicle to the central
6 computer; and
7 determining a number of vehicles within a designated area
8 with respect to the first port.

1 23. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 22, wherein
2 executing a vehicle allocation program at the central
3 computer further comprises determining whether the number
4 of vehicles within the designated area is below a preset
5 value.

1 24. (Twice Amended) A method as recited in claim 21, wherein
2 executing a vehicle allocation program at the central
3 computer further comprises determining whether the number
4 of available vehicles in the first VSG is below a preset
5 value.

Please add following new claims to the subject application.

27. (New) A vehicle sharing system for sharing a fleet of vehicles, comprising:
a plurality of ports at geographically remote locations relative to each other;
a plurality of user interface terminals at said plurality of ports for receiving requests for vehicles from the fleet;
a computer system coupled for communication with said plurality of user interface terminals and programmed for:
in response to a user request received at a first port, defining a first vehicle search group (VSG) of the first port;
in response to at least one vehicle in the first VSG, allocating a vehicle therefrom to the user request;
in response to no vehicle in the first VSG, defining a second VSG of a second port;
in response to at least one vehicle in the second VSG, selecting a vehicle therefrom for allocating to the user request; and
in response to selecting a vehicle from the second VSG, generating a relocation request of the selected vehicle from the second port to the first port; and
a vehicle transport device for transporting one or more vehicles from one port to another port, wherein:

28 at least one vehicle in the fleet includes a tow
29 hitch receptacle; and
30 said vehicle transport device comprises a tow bar
31 for coupling to a tow hitch receptacle and
32 connecting two vehicles together.

1 28. (New) The system as recited in claim 27, wherein said
2 computer system is further programmed for including in
3 the first VSG vehicles due to arrive at the first port
4 within a preset time period.

1 29. (New) A vehicle sharing system for sharing a fleet of
2 vehicles, comprising:
3 a plurality of ports at geographically remote locations
4 relative to each other;
5 a plurality of user interface terminals at said plurality
6 of ports for receiving requests for vehicles from
7 the fleet;
8 a computer system coupled for communication with said
9 plurality of user interface terminals and
10 programmed for:
11 in response to a user request received at a first
12 port, defining a first vehicle search group
13 (VSG) of the first port;
14 in response to at least one vehicle in the first
15 VSG, allocating a vehicle therefrom to the
16 user request;
17 in response to no vehicle in the first VSG,
18 defining a second VSG of a second port;

19 in response to at least one vehicle in the second
20 VSG, selecting a vehicle therefrom for
21 allocating to the user request; and
22 in response to selecting a vehicle from the second
23 VSG, generating a relocation request of the
24 selected vehicle from the second port to the
25 first port; and
26 a vehicle transport device for transporting one or more
27 vehicles from one port to another port, wherein:
28 at least one vehicle in the fleet includes a
29 carrier hitch receptacle; and
30 said vehicle transport device comprises a carrier
31 bracket connectable to the said carrier hitch
32 receptacle of one vehicle, for carrying a
33 second vehicle.

1 30. (New) The system as recited in claim 29, wherein:
2 said carrier bracket comprises a cycle carrier bracket
3 for carrying a cycle; and
4 said second vehicle comprises a cycle.
